

Board Special Meeting

Work Session: K-12 Science Adoption; Policy 2015, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials

April 2, 2019 4:30 pm

Auditorium, John Stanford Center

2445 3rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98134



Minutes

Call to order:

Director Geary called the work session order at 4:34pm.

Director Burke, Director Geary, Director Mack were in attendance. Director Harris arrived 4:34. Director Patu arrived at 4:55. Director Pinkham arrived at 5:54.

Staff in attendance were: Superintendent Juneau, Chief Academic Officer Diane DeBacker, Executive Director Cashel Toner, and Executive Director Kyle Kinoshita.

Work Session: K-12 Science Adoption

Superintendent Juneau started off the work session by saying a few words about the process that the Science Adoption Committee followed and thanking the committee for the time and effort they invested into the process. She gave a big thank you to MaryMargaret Welch, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) Science Program Manager, for her hard work.

Dr. Kinoshita started the presentation and explained what the objectives that Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction (CAI) were hoping to show by the end of the work session. He gave an outline of how the presentation was going to proceed. Dr. DeBacker also spoke about the two objectives they were going to present. She has participated in other district's adoptions of curriculum and feels that this committee has adhered to a very high standard. She also wanted the Board to understand the process used by the committees in making their final decisions.

Ms. Toner spoke to how the presentation will address the changes of the landscape of science, and how these changes played into how the committee looked at the curriculum materials. She also let the Board know that there would be members from the committee that would be presenting and referenced the materials that would be discussed. Ms. Toner shared a short history of science in SPS. It has been twenty-four years since SPS adopted new instructional materials at the K-5 level. In 2002, there was an incomplete middle school instructional materials adoption. In spite of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) changing in 2003, 2005, and 2009 SPS teachers were able to align and localize their teaching without new materials. Finally, in 2010, the high school instructional materials adoption failed due to funding restrictions. Due to the failure to both adopt and fund instructional materials, teachers have been creating their own curriculum to fill the void. In 2013 the EALRs changed and as such, our curriculum is not in alignment with the state.

Ms. Jennifer Fox, SPS science teacher, spoke to her experience as a member of the 2010 high science adoption committee. Ms. Fox reminded the board members that the recommendations the committee made in 2010 were not adopted. The next speaker was Ms. Angie DeLoreto. Ms. DeLoreto is a parent and an employee who work with the science curriculum in the Bellevue school district. She spoke about the collaboration between Bellevue and Seattle in sharing resources and for adopting the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Ms. Fox reminded the board members that a key shift with NGSS is that the students' focus has moved from "learning about science" to "wondering about science" so that students have a way of grounding their learning to the real world. On the slide illustrating the Next Generation Science Standards, all three dimensions of science content, science and engineering practices, and cross-cutting concepts need to be meaningfully integrated in instruction and in the classroom. The dimensions need to provide high quality, rigorous learning for all students, including English language learners, advanced learners, and for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Dr. Jessica Thompson, a professor at the University of Washington (UW), works with students who are studying to become science teachers. She spoke to how the adoption committee began work with elementary teachers around the NGSS curriculum. Science practices and cross-cutting concepts are new dimensions in the standards. A video clip showing how an elementary student was shown to illustrate the new approach to learning science.

- Director Mack said that from the video she can appreciate the thought process that the student went through but was curious that the student was not using some of the terms that she thought would have been in the lesson.
- Director Burke wanted to know if there was a pedagogy component along with the curriculum component. Are the key phenomena grounding the learning for students? He also wanted to know the amount of hands-on activities so that students can build evidence-based learning.
- Director Mack wondered what studies have been done around the different curricula and how it eventually ties back to the preparation needed for students in higher education going into science fields; i.e., pre-med. She wondered if the standards link to higher education standards for careers heavy in science. She stated she did believe the new standards will help all students get a better sense of science, but also wonders if it will also benefit students who might be interested in going into the science fields.

Next on the agenda was a review by Ms. Toner of the demographic makeup of the adoption committee. Mr. Brad Shigenaka and Ms. Christine Benita, SPS curriculum specialists, detailed the demographic makeup of the entire committee. There were three subcommittees with a total of 88 members. The committees included parents, students, teachers, and staff. The role of central office district science staff was to facilitate the evaluation and collection of evidence for the committees. It was noted that central office staff members were non-voting members.

- Director Harris commented that it should come as no surprise that board members got a lot of emails. She wanted to know more about how the participants were chosen for the committee. She asked whether the committee was loaded with a lot of people who liked to agree, and if there was robust pushback. The answer was that everyone who applied was invited, and they reached out to people in the community if they felt that there might be an area where a group might not be represented.

Ms. Benita spoke about Policy 2015, “Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials”, and how the policy guided the adoption committee’s work. Denny Middle School science teacher, Ms. Anastasia Sanchez, who was a member of the committee, summarized the work that the committees and how the process for the K-8 committees lead to work for the high school committee. Two open houses were held to engage communities. Ms. Alisha Taylor, SPS curriculum specialist, described the standards alignment that the committee considered. There were five standards categories, but there were seventy-seven robust criteria. The goal was to make science education accessible for all students. Ms. Tiffany Robinson, a science teacher at Nathan Hale, reminded all in attendance that there was a time in history when there were very few opportunities in sciences for people who were not white males. She stated the need for science curriculum to shift away from a model that asks students to memorize and do labs for the sake of doing labs, to a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) approach which prepares students for the jobs of the future. She also emphasized how important this is given the state’s new three-year science graduation requirement.

Ms. Toner did a time check at 5:35. The presentation moved on to who was involved in the committee and the process that each sub committee went through. Ms. Taylor discussed the field-testing for the curriculum and where it took place. There were 62 field tests in over 34 schools in all regions of the district and representing a diverse population including Title I and language immersion.

- Director Mack wanted to have more information about the distribution and whether or not there was even distribution in the number of classrooms. She was referred to the reference materials for specific details.
- Director Harris had concerns that since Amplify had a blanket waiver that there was equity among the selections and questioned whether there was bias from the teachers who have been using Amplify. Dr. Kinoshita explained that the committee used the criteria to ensure that all vendors started from ground zero. The committee was asked to analyze all the components and score them. An additional check was that many of the members of the committee were not teachers, and did not teach Amplify, so they did not have direct experience with the program prior to the field- testing.
- Director Mack asked about whether or not the field-testing was different from the scoring. Field-testing took place between January and March and during that period all three curriculums were tested before returning to the school’s previous curriculum. She would like to have a list of what curriculum each participating school was using before the field-testing took place and what field test curriculum were used at which schools. Ms. Toner said that the department would get the directors the information.
- Director Burke summarized that the work session had shared the vision for the adoption committee, what we want for students, and he appreciated the aspiration. He hopes that with the accelerating change in curriculum, that we are still going to be closing racial and gender gaps.

Dr. Kinoshita covered the part of the presentation, talking about how the committee was guided by Policy 2015, and Procedure 6220SP.G “Purchasing”, to ensure that the integrity of the process was protected. The adoption committee had a clean process that has been supervised by many departments and communication with the Board. He pointed out that the allegations of impropriety were unfortunate in that it cast doubts on the hard work of staff members who

supported teachers at a time when there was no instructional materials, as well as the hard work of the adoption.

- Director Geary reminded everyone that we are talking about the process, not specific curriculum.
- Director Harris requested some benchmarking, locally and nationally, to see which districts adopted which curriculum. She was surprised that there wasn't any information in the presentation.
- Director Burke thanked the committee for the presentations, and for understanding that the integrity of the process is critical. The Board needs to know that there wasn't a way for a company to "buy" their way into SPS in choosing a curriculum. He also had a question around about high school vendors, which Ms. Toner will give to the directors.
- Director Mack asked if during the process there was any research done with neighboring districts to see what they were using. She also asked the meaning of a bullet on the PowerPoint referencing protecting against the bias of the District science team. Dr. Kinoshita answered that while district science team staff helped to facilitate the meetings, they did not get to vote.
- Director Pinkham asked about what efforts were made in order to get American Indians on the committee. Ms. Welch said that they reached out to Gail Morris in order to invite people for the committee, but no one came forward.
- Director Harris asked about the funds an anonymous donor made and whether or not that had an impact on the waived curriculum. Ms. Welch responded that there was no money given to SPS to implement curriculum, and that an independent donor went to Amplify to provide subscriptions. This happened long before the Board and the District decided to move forward with the adoption.

Superintendent Juneau summarized the work session and asked that we believe the staff has integrity. This session ended at 6:11

Work Session: Policy 2015.B

This work session started at: 6:21

Staff in attendance: Deputy Superintendent Stephen Nielsen was in attendance for this work session as Superintendent Juneau had to leave. Chief Academic Officer Diane DeBacker and Executive Director Kyle Kinoshita.

The purpose of this work session was for the Board to understand what SPS is trying to do around revisions to Policy 2015 "Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials".

Director Geary talked about this work session being an opportunity to have Policy 2015 make sense. She and Director Burke had discussed how policy is the aspiration of the Board, but the procedure is for staff to follow. Dr. Kinoshita gave a brief history of policy 2015, and how there is not language for adapting curriculum such as "Since Time Immemorial" (STI). The policy only outlines the process for a competitive commercial purchase. By revising the policy, it would be possible to adopt materials such as STI, ethnic studies, and a wider range of instructional materials. Instructional materials could be defined as print and/or digital. The aim is to provide transparency and show collaboration with the Board.

- Director Geary emphasized the need for SPS to be clear in what we want to accomplish with Policy 2015.
- Director Mack wants to make sure that we clarify definitions in policy (e.g. what is extended core). She also asked about the B in Procedure 2015SP.B (referenced in the presentation), and if that meant there were other procedures under 2015. Dr. Kinoshita said that there are 2015SP.A-2015SP.D procedures, which deal with different aspects of the selection and adoption of instructional materials. Director Mack asked whether these could be sent out to Board members.

The next slides addressed the changes that were made to policy 2015 and procedure 2015SP.B.

- Director Harris asked when the last time this policy was looked at and who was on the Board when it was done. She also asked who the members of the instructional materials committee were and whether or not the Board was informed of the changes. Dr. Kinoshita said that he would get list of the committee members to the Board through Friday Memo.
- Director Mack wanted to know how the policy clarifies the linkage between courses and instructional materials. She wanted to know if there is a policy that specifically says that this material is tied directly to the course catalog. She does appreciate the feedback loop if there are new standards and/or laws that come and there is a need for a new curriculum. She feels that it is important to spell it out in policy that notifying the Board is part of the process. She wondered who decides the criteria for looking at curriculum. Dr. Kinoshita replied that SPS looks at learning standards, the Guiding Principles in Policy 2015, , information from professional organizations related to the subject area, guidelines against bias, and Policy 0030.

Dr. DeBacker addressed that for this Board Action Report (BAR), what triggered the need for revising Policy 2015 is that the state adopted new standards. Dr. Kinoshita pointed out that in September, the Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Department outlined a five-year process for the adoption of instructional materials, which never existed before.

- Director Burke has followed curriculum adoptions for 10 years and feels that the process is good. The Board delegates to the IMC, and they oversee all of the committees. They are a point of influence in front of every adoption, whatever the guiding principles for the process is. This policy is an overarching story; it has policy, definitions, looks at factors, gaps, budget as well as equity focus. It is putting clarity into the policy what it means to adopt curriculum. It allows for more inclusive categories.
- Director Patu asked about when looking at adoption of materials whether the materials are really what we want students to learn, and whether or not we are presenting to students in a way that they are learning.
- Director Harris is concerned that the professional development (PD) around curriculum adoption has not always been good, and is the district prepared to require PD as part of the collective bargaining agreement.
- Director Geary asked if this should be a high-level guiding principle included around professional development.
- Director Pinkhan asked if we would be having to go through this whole process now that the district has added native languages. He wasn't expecting an answer immediately but was curious.

- Director Burke noted that the category of “extended core instructional materials” is a way to correct for curriculum alignment that will help fill the gap in a way that will be less expensive than an entirely new adoption.
- Director Mack wanted to underscore the importance of PD.
- Director Harris said that from a guiding principle standpoint, we need to have a loop for a course correction.
- Director Geary feels that it is interesting to get curriculum that is vetted for bias and is good for K-5. We are very ambitious about what we want curriculum to do. It is important for policy to make all of those lenses are part of the assessment.
- Director Mack said that if we veto out curriculum that does not meet the needs of everyone then it will be problematic.
- Director Burke said that our policy goes through a multiple step process with clear guidance to the committee. The number of expectations can only be met by most commercial publishers hoping to cover everything. It is best to buy core curriculum and then get other pieces to fill in.
- There was a time check at 7:10.

Director Geary said that she will try to clean up the policy with input from Director Burke from what happened tonight and will forward to the entire Board with a “Do not reply all”.

Adjourn

This meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm